



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship February 22, 2026 9:30am
First Sunday of Lent

Gathering

The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow. So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted

In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.

WELCOME Rev. Karen Wright

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We gather at the threshold of Lent, a season of turning and returning.

ALL: We come from busy lives and crowded hearts, seeking the quiet presence of God.

ONE: Jesus went into the wilderness to listen for God's voice.

ALL: We, too, are invited to listen.

ONE: In Christ, grace meets us where we are.

ALL: In Christ, new life stands before us.

ONE: Let us pause, breathe, and prepare our hearts.

All: Let us worship the Lord our God.

*HYMN 462

“I Love to Tell the Story”

LINE NAME

462 I Love to Tell the Story

1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
 2 I love to tell the sto - ry; 'tis pleas - ant to re - peat
 3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best

of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
 what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
 seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it, like the rest.

I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know 'tis true;
 I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
 And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,

it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else could do.
 the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly Word.
 'twill be the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

This text is drawn from the second part of a fifty-stanza poem on the life of Christ written in 1866, during the author's recovery from a serious illness. The tune named for her first appeared three years later, and the composer was responsible for the creation of the refrain.

THE WORD

Refrain



CALL TO CONFESION

Emily Nelson Dixon

Lent invites us to pause, to listen, to notice where we are standing — between what has been and what might be, at the threshold of repentance, healing, and new life. Trusting the mercy of God who meets us here, let us confess our sins together.

PRAYER OF CONFESION (*Together*)

Merciful God, you meet us in the wilderness places of our lives, yet we often resist the journey. We confess that we are tempted to choose comfort over faithfulness, power over humility, and quick fixes over lasting transformation. Forgive us for the times we avoid the truth about ourselves. Forgive us when fear keeps us from crossing the thresholds you place before us. In this holy season, slow us down. Teach us to listen. Strengthen us to follow Christ — not only on the mountaintop, but also in the wilderness. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Where temptation once held power, God's mercy now abounds. Where we have fallen short, Christ has made a way. In Jesus Christ, we are met with forgiveness, renewed with hope, and invited into new life.

All: Thanks be to God.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you and all others!

RESPONSE 227

“Jesus Remember Me”

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Romans 5:12–19 (NRSVue)

Rob Schendel

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned — for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

MEDITATION

“Anthem for Winds and Percussion”

Claude T. Smith

GCPC Wind Ensemble

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 4:1–11(NRSVue)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”
Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

**Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“Thresholds Tell Us Stories”

Rev. Karen Wright

*HYMN 223

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

HAMBURG

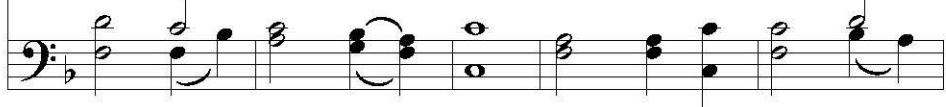
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross 223



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
 2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the
 3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and
 4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a



Prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
 death of Christ my God; all the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down; did e'er such love and
 pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss, and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
 charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
 sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
 so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.



This familiar text from the beginning of the 18th century grew out of Isaac Watts's desire to give Christians the ability to sing about gospel events. It is set here to a very restrained tune from the early 19th century inspired by the patterns of Gregorian chant.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

“Dove of Peace”

Gilbert M. Martin

Linda Dover, organist

Sending

JESUS CHRIST: LIFE

167 Forty Days and Forty Nights



1 For - ty days and for - ty nights you were fast - ing in the wild;
 2 Shall not we your sor - row share and from world - ly joys ab - stain,
 3 Then if Sa - tan on us press, flesh or spir - it to as - sail,
 4 So shall we have peace di - vine: ho - lier glad-ness ours shall be;
 5 Keep, O keep us, Sav - ior dear, ev - er con-stant by your side,



for - ty days and for - ty nights temp - ted, and yet un - de - filed.
 fast - ing with un - ceas-ing prayer, strong with you to suf - fer pain?
 vic - tor in the wil - der - ness, grant that we not faint nor fail!
 round us, too, shall an - gels shine, such as served you faith - ful - ly.
 that with you we may ap - pear at the e - ter - nal Eas - ter - tide.



This text, given sharper focus by being reduced from nine stanzas to five, reflects both on Christ's temptation in the wilderness and on the purpose and goal of Lent as preparation for Easter. It pairs well with a 17th-century German chorale setting for Psalm 130.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

“Anthem for Winds and Percussion”
GCPC Wind Ensemble

Claude T. Smith

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD'S PEACE TO YOU

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GCPC Wind Ensemble

Pam Smith Kelly, director

Flute: Debbie Stewart

Oboe: Chris Culp

Clarinets: Bob Dover, Lauren Bond, Edwin Fukanaga

Bass Clarinet: Pat Setser, Debbie Hall, Natalie Walker

Alto Saxophone: Miles McDonald

Bassoon: Lisa England

Trumpet: Dwight Rhoades, Lane Benton

Horns: Jim Kelly, Ellin Schoenfeld, Wendy Kenemer

Trombones: David Roth, David England, Chris Dixon

Euphoniums: Lara Schesser, Mike Hockley

Tuba: Trey Bures

String Bass: GayLee Ludwig-Bonney

Percussion: Jill Endaya-Allen, Keith Langabee



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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